



Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICE

Policies and Procedures

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1) Introduction

1.1 Purpose:

This document is intended to summarize standard, best practice guidelines for the referral and provision of sign language interpreting/transliterating services in Rhode Island. This manual may serve as a reference regarding procedures and ethical standards for both those administering and/or receiving sign language interpreting/transliterating services.

1.2 Definitions

- A) Consumer: an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing or other individual with disabilities who use special communication techniques in order to communicate, and individuals whose primary language is sign language (e.g., American Sign Language, manually coded sign systems).
- B) Requester: any person, agency, or entity that secures the services of the interpreter/transliterator. The requester is financially responsible for the provision of said services and is also referred to as the paying party.
- C) Interpreter: an individual who renders a message between spoken English and American Sign Language (ASL).
- D) Transliterator: an individual who renders a message between spoken English and a Sign English form that utilizes ASL signs, but more closely follows the grammar and syntax of spoken English (i.e. PSE or Contact Sign).
- E) RID Certified Interpreter/Transliterator: person who possesses valid National Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

Common RID certifications:

- CI – Certificate of Interpretation
- CT – Certificate of Transliteration
- CSC – Comprehensive Skills Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- SC:L – Specialist Certificate: Legal
- IC – Interpretation Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- TC – Transliteration Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)

- CDI – Certified Deaf Interpreter
- OTC – Oral Transliteration Certificate
- OIC – Oral Interpreting Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- NIC – National Interpreter Certification

- F) NAD Certified Interpreter: person who possesses a valid certification level III, IV, or V currently as administered by the RID.
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- G) Screened Interpreter/Transliterator: person who has passed a recognized state screening or quality assurance.
- H) Licensed Interpreter/Transliterator: person who possesses valid license(s) to practice interpreting/transliterating in Rhode Island. Questions about specific categories of licensure and the limitations therein should be directed to the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-2827.

2) Procedures:

- 2.1 An Interpreter Referral Service may be utilized to secure the services of the interpreter/transliterator or the interpreter/transliterator may be contacted directly. Because of the recognized shortage of qualified interpreters/transliterators, it is recommended that requests be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Requests made with less than 2 weeks notice should still be honored. Regardless of the notice provided, a qualified interpreter/transliterator can not be assured. If an interpreter/transliterator is not available, the requester should be notified at least 2 business days prior to the assignment date. Consumers should request interpreting/transliterating services directly from the person, agency, or place in which the services will be used. Said person, agency, or place shall be the requester of services or paying party. Questions about particular referral service policies should be directed to that referral agency or the interpreter/transliterator.
- 2.2 The requester should provide the following information to a referral coordinator or the interpreter/transliterator.
 - A) Name and phone number of requesting party (paying party)
 - B) Name of consumer(s)
 - C) Day, time, and precise location of assignment (address, bldg., floor, dept, suite, and room)
 - D) Length of assignment
 - E) Nature/type of assignment

- F) Consumer's language preference if known
- G) Request for preferred interpreter/transliterators if any
- H) Billing information (address, contact name, phone number)

- 2.3 Follow-up assignments may be arranged at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterators, paying party, and consumers. Follow-up assignments should be routed through an interpreter referral service.

Please note: Interpreter should defer to billing party's procedures for hiring interpreters before accepting follow up assignments.

- 2.4 Replacement interpreters: If the interpreter/transliterators cannot fulfill the requirements of an assignment that he/she has accepted, then the interpreter/transliterators may find his/her own qualified replacement. An interpreter referral service may assist in securing a replacement interpreter/transliterators.

3) Assignment categories:

- 3.1 Legal/Court settings: Section 8-5-8 of Rhode Island General Laws mandates that the court must provide an interpreter for a deaf or hard of hearing witness and/or party in a court proceeding, including a juror. Because of the serious nature and potential consequences to parties involved in legal proceedings, it is best practice that interpreter/transliterators must hold RID Specialist Certificate in Legal (SC:L) for all legal/court assignments. In the event a SC:L is not available, the interpreter/transliterators must have passed the RID legal written exam, or dual certifications (both CI and CT) or NAD level V with legal training from an RID approval sponsor. Please see the NRID SC:L application eligibility instructions at www.RID.org.
- 3.2 Emergency settings: Please see Emergency Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service Policies and Procedures.
- 3.3 Other settings: Interpreter/Transliterators shall accept assignments based on qualifications, experience, licensure category, and skills in a particular setting according to number 7.2 of NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct Tenets below.

4) Eligibility of Interpreter/Transliterators:

All interpreters/transliterators working in Rhode Island shall adhere to the Rules and Regulations for Licensing Interpreters for the Deaf (RI General Law § 5-71-Interpreter for the Deaf). Said rules and regulations are available from the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5097, phone: 401-222-2827.

5) Fee Schedule and Fee Policies:

5.1 Fees:

5.1.1 - STATE AGENCIES:

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RI CDHH) with the assistance of the Rhode Island Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RI RID) establishes state rates that are based on current Master's Pricing Agreement (MPA), such as the certain certifications and years of interpreting and are reviewed annually.

RI RID shall submit their proposed rates for the State to RI CDHH by or on May 1st before the next fiscal year for MPA that begins on July 1st.

5.1.2 RI CDHH handles the appropriate paperwork such as a proof of license in RI, the W-9, updates on the interpreting certifications, and others from the interpreters in order for them to comply the master pricing agreement (MPA) requirements. Once the MPA number is given to an interpreter, the interpreter is able to work with the State of RI as long as their license is in a good standing and for the duration of MPA.

5.1.3 MPA shall include the standard policies listed below:

- Two-hour minimum to be paid.
- If the assignment is cancelled less than 48 hours (2 business days), payment must be made for total hours reserved.
- If the assignment requires less time than reserved, payment must be made for total hours reserved.
- An assignment, 2 hours or more (sometimes less than two hours), will require more than one interpreter (extenuating circumstances at the professional judgment and discretion of the interpreter according to NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct). Please refer to Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's Standard Practice papers and list of situations as the guidelines that might warrant 2 interpreters for an assignment that is less than 2 hours long.

- For Post Secondary Institutions if an on going class is cancelled less than two weeks (10 business days) before the start of assignment, interpreter must be paid a two week severance period.
- In the case a client has not arrived for the assignment, as a guide, the interpreter/transliterators is to wait no less than 30 minutes, unless, informed by the paying party the assignment has been cancelled.
- Mileage – the mileage rate is determined by the state.

5.2 PRIVATE ENTITIES OR ANY NON-STATE ENTITIES:

Interpreter/transliterators will set their own fees for services. It is standard practice that interpreter/transliterators charge a minimum/appearance fee that is equal to 2 hours at the interpreter/transliterators' standard rate. Billing beyond said "appearance fee/2 hour minimum" is at the interpreter/transliterators' discretion. Billing, cancellation, and payment arrangements will be at the interpreter/transliterators' discretion and arranged directly with paying party.

5.2.1 Pay Differential: Interpreter/transliterators may charge a pay differential for adverse circumstances (i.e. emergency assignments or last minute requests). Pay differential will be at the interpreter/transliterators' discretion and arranged directly with the paying party.

5.2.2 Mileage/travel time: Interpreter/transliterators may charge for mileage and/or travel time for assignments. These fees will be arranged directly with the paying party.

6) Assignment Protocol

- 6.1 Two-hours or less: Generally, one interpreter/transliterators may accept an assignment that is expected to require 2 hours or less of time. However, the two-hour guideline shall be at the interpreter/transliterators' discretion.
- 6.2 Multiple Interpreters/transliterators at Same Assignment: For assignments that are expected to exceed 2 hours, paying parties are strongly encouraged to secure more than one interpreter/transliterators.
- 6.3 Special Circumstances: Some assignments that are less than 2 hours in

length may require multiple interpreters/transliterators (i.e. lectures, presentations, and meetings containing a heavy information load and providing few or no breaks). Also, situations that present complex communication needs (i.e. Deaf-Blind, CDI, concurrent sessions, multiple consumers and/or a request for multiple modes of communication) may require more than one interpreter/transliterators. (Refer to RID Standard Practice Papers at www.RID.org)

6.4 Cancellation of Assignment:

Standard cancellation policy is 2 business days prior to date of assignment and is applied at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterators.

6.4.1 For private post secondary institutions:

General Practice: When a post secondary assignment is cancelled at any time during the semester/quarter, interpreters/transliterators shall be given two weeks severance pay. However, the interpreter/transliterators may negotiate with the paying party at his/her discretion prior to accepting assignment.

7) Professional and Ethical Standards:

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) puts forth the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct which exist to protect and guide both interpreters/transliterators and consumers. It is expected that every working interpreter/transliterators know, understand, and adhere to the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct. NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct Tenets as defined by the RID are listed below.

- 7.1 Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
- 7.2 Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
- 7.3 Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
- 7.4 Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
- 7.5 Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
- 7.6 Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.

7.7 Interpreters engage in professional development.

For more details, refer to NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct at www.RID.org.

8) Feedback and Disciplinary Actions:

8.1 The Code of Ethics Provoked or any “Harm Done” incidents caused by a RI licensed interpreter/transliterators:

The Board of Examiners for the Deaf under the Department of Health is the appropriate point of contact regarding complaints about an interpreter/transliterators service. Concerns about the service received by a paying party or a consumer can be directed to the Board of Examiners for the Deaf at the Department of Health –Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-2827. Paying parties and consumers are also encouraged to make any concerns known to the interpreter referral specialist of RI CDHH for a particular assignment.

8.2 Unsatisfactory or complaints on the Interpreter Referral Service:

Grievance Resolution Guideline:

Please send a written letter to the Interpreter Referral Specialist and cc to Executive Director at the following address:

Interpreter Referral Specialist
Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
One Capitol Hill, Ground Level
Providence, RI 02908

The letter should include the nature of the problem or the reason for complaint, date, name and the contact information, in case the Referral Specialist needs to reach them for further inquiry.

You should receive a response from RI CDHH within 10 business days concerning your complaint outlining what steps RI CDHH is taking toward the resolution on your behalf.

8.3 Comments on the Quality of Interpreter Referral Services:

Send either a written letter or an e-mail to the Executive Director and Interpreter Referral Specialist of your acknowledgement.

Mail to: Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, One Capitol Hill, Ground Level, Providence, RI 02908.

E-mail to: CDHH@CDHH.RI.GOV.

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will respond to any written letter of complaint in a timely manner. RI CDHH is committed to ensuring the highest quality Interpreter Referral Service for its consumers.